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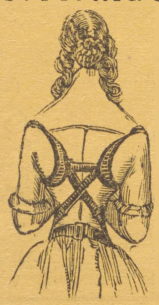

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CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH REBECCA'S HUSBAND APPEARS FOR A SHORT TIME.

EVERY reader of a sentimental turn (and we desire no other) must have been pleased with the *tableau* with which the last act of our little drama concluded; for what can be prettier than an image of Love on his knees before Beauty?

But when Love heard that awful confession from Beauty that she was married already, he bounced up from his attitude of humility on the carpet, uttering exclamations which caused poor little Beauty to be more frightened than she was when she made her avowal. "Married! you 're joking," the Baronet cried, after the first explosion of rage and wonder. "You 're making vun of me, Becky. Who'd ever go to marry you without a shilling to your vortune?"

"Married! married!" Rebecca said, in an agony of tears—her voice choking with emotion, her handkerchief up to her ready eyes, fainting against the mantel-piece—a figure of woe fit to melt the most obdurate heart. "O Sir Pitt, dear Sir Pitt, do not think me ungrateful for all your goodness to me. It is only your generosity that has extorted my secret."

"Generosity be hanged!" Sir Pitt roared out. "Who is it tu, then, you 're married? Where was it?"

"Let me come back with you to the country, sir! Let me watch over you as faithfully as ever! Don't, don't separate me from dear Queen's Crawley!"

"The feller has left you, has he?" the Baronet said, beginning, as he fancied, to comprehend. "Well, Becky—come back if you like. You can't eat your cake and have it. Any ways I made you a vair offer. Coom back as governess—you shall have it all your own way." She held out one hand. She cried fit to break her heart; her ringlets fell over her face, and over the marble mantel-piece where she laid it.

"So the rascal ran off, eh?" Sir Pitt said, with a hideous attempt at consolation. "Never mind, Becky, *I'll* take care of 'ee."

"O Sir! it would be the pride of my life to go back to Queen's Crawley, and take care of the children, and of you as formerly, when you said you were pleased with the services of your little Rebecca. When I

think of what you have just offered me, my heart fills with gratitude—indeed it does. I can't be your wife, sir; let me—let me be your daughter!"

Saying which, Rebecca went down on *her* knees in a most tragical way, and, taking Sir Pitt's horny black hand between her own two (which were very pretty and white, and as soft as satin), looked up in his face with an expression of exquisite pathos and confidence, when—when the door opened, and Miss Crawley sailed in.

Mrs. Firkin and Miss Briggs, who happened by chance to be at the

parlour-door soon after the Baronet and Rebecca entered the apartment, had also seen accidentally, through the key-hole, the old gentleman prostrate before the governess, and had heard the generous proposal which he made her. It was scarcely out of his mouth, when Mrs. Firkin and Miss Briggs had streamed up the stairs, had rushed into the drawing-room where Miss Crawley was reading the French novel, and had given that old lady the astounding intelligence that Sir Pitt was on his knees, proposing to Miss Sharp. And if you calculate the time for the above dialogue to take place—the time for Briggs and Firkin to fly to the drawing-room—the time for Miss Crawley to be astonished, and to drop her volume of Pigault le Brun—and the time for her to come down stairs—you will see how

exactly accurate this history is, and how Miss Crawley *must* have appeared at the very instant when Rebecca had assumed the attitude of humility.

"It is the lady on the ground, and not the gentleman," Miss Crawley said, with a look and voice of great scorn. "They told me that *you* were on your knees, Sir Pitt: do kneel once more, and let me see this pretty couple!"

"I have thanked Sir Pitt Crawley, ma'am," Rebecca said, rising, "and have told him that—that I never can become Lady Crawley."

"Refused him!" Miss Crawley said, more bewildered than ever. Briggs and Firkin at the door opened the eyes of astonishment and the lips of wonder.

"Yes—refused," Rebecca continued, with a sad, tearful voice.

"And am I to credit my ears that you absolutely proposed to her, Sir Pitt?" the old lady asked.

"Ees," said the Baronet, "I did."

"And she refused you as she says?"

"Ees," Sir Pitt said, his features on a broad grin.

"It does not seem to break your heart at any rate," Miss Crawley remarked.

"Nawt a bit," answered Sir Pitt, with a coolness and good-humour which set Miss Crawley almost mad with bewilderment. That an old gentleman of station should fall on his knees to a penniless governess, and burst out laughing because she refused to marry him,—that a penniless governess should refuse a Baronet with four thousand a year,—these were mysteries which Miss Crawley could never comprehend. It surpassed any complications of intrigue in her favourite Pigault le Brun.

"I'm glad you think it good sport, brother," she continued, groping wildly through this amazement.

"Vamous," said Sir Pitt. "Who'd ha' thought it! what a sly little devil! what a little fox it waws!" he muttered to himself, chuckling with pleasure.

"Who'd have thought what?" cries Miss Crawley, stamping with her foot. "Pray, Miss Sharp, are you waiting for the Prince Regent's divorce, that you don't think our family good enough for you?"

"My attitude," Rebecca said, "when you came in, Ma'am, did not look as if I despised such an honour as this good—this noble man has deigned to offer me. Do you think I have no heart? Have you all loved me, and been so kind to the poor orphan—deserted—girl, and am *I* to feel nothing? O my friends! O my benefactors! may not my love, my life, my duty, try to repay the confidence you have shown me? Do you grudge me even gratitude, Miss Crawley? It is too much—my heart is too full;" and she sank down in a chair so pathetically, that most of the audience present were perfectly melted with her sadness.

"Whether you marry me or not, you're a good little girl, Becky, and I'm your vriend, mind," said Sir Pitt, and putting on his crape-bound hat, he walked away—greatly to Rebecca's relief; for it was evident that her secret was unrevealed to Miss Crawley, and she had the advantage of a brief reprieve.

Putting her handkerchief to her eyes, and nodding away honest Briggs,

who would have followed her up-stairs, she went up to her apartment; while Briggs and Miss Crawley, in a high state of excitement, remained to discuss the strange event, and Firkin, not less moved, dived down into the kitchen regions, and talked of it with all the male and female company there. And so impressed was Mrs. Firkin with the news, that she thought proper to write off by that very night's post, "with her humble duty to Mrs. Bute Crawley and the famly at the Rectory, and Sir Pitt has been and proposed for to marry Miss Sharp, wherein she has refused him to the wonder of all."

The two ladies in the dining-room (where worthy Miss Briggs was delighted to be admitted once more to a confidential conversation with her patroness) wondered to their hearts' content at Sir Pitt's offer, and Rebecca's refusal; Briggs very acutely suggesting that there must have been some obstacle in the shape of a previous attachment, otherwise no young woman in her senses would ever have refused so advantageous a proposal.

"You would have accepted it yourself, wouldn't you, Briggs?" Miss Crawley said, kindly.

"Would it not be a privilege to be Miss Crawley's sister?" Briggs replied, with meek evasion.

"Well, Becky would have made a good Lady Crawley, after all," Miss Crawley remarked, (who was mollified by the girl's refusal, and very liberal and generous now there was no call for her sacrifices.) "She has brains in plenty (much more wit in her little finger than you have my poor dear Briggs in all your head.) Her manners are excellent now I have formed her. She is a Montmorency, Briggs, and blood *is* something, though I despise it for my part; and she would have held her own amongst those pompous stupid Hampshire people much better than that unfortunate ironmonger's daughter."

Briggs coincided as usual, and the "previous attachment" was then discussed in conjectures. "You poor friendless creatures are always having some foolish *tendre*," Miss Crawley said. "You yourself, you know, were in love with a writing master (don't cry, Briggs—you're always crying, and it won't bring him to life again), and I suppose this unfortunate Becky has been silly and sentimental too—some apothecary, or house-steward, or painter, or young curate, or something of that sort."

"Poor thing, poor thing!" says Briggs (who was thinking of twenty-four years back, and that hectic young writing master whose lock of yellow hair, and whose letters, beautiful in their illegibility, she cherished in her old desk up stairs.) "Poor thing, poor thing!" says Briggs. Once more she was a fresh-cheeked lass of eighteen; she was at evening church and the hectic writing master and she were quavering out of the same psalm-book.

"After such conduct on Rebecca's part," Miss Crawley said enthusiastically, "our family should do something. Find out who is the *objet*, Briggs. I'll set him up in a shop; or order my portrait of him, you know; or speak to my cousin the Bishop—and I'll *doter* Becky, and we'll have a wedding, Briggs, and you shall make the breakfast, and be a brides' maid."

Briggs declared that it would be delightful, and vowed that her dear

Miss Crawley was always kind and generous, and went up to Rebecca's bed-room to console her and prattle about the offer, and the refusal, and the cause thereof; and to hint at the generous intentions of Miss Crawley, and to find out who was the gentleman that had the mastery of Miss Sharp's heart.

Rebecca was very kind, very affectionate and affected—responded to Briggs' offers of tenderness with grateful fervour—owned there was a secret attachment—a delicious mystery—what a pity Miss Briggs had not remained half a minute longer at the key-hole! Rebecca might, perhaps, have told more: but five minutes after Miss Briggs' arrival in Rebecca's apartment, Miss Crawley actually made her appearance there—an unheard of honour;—her impatience had overcome her; she could not wait for the tardy operations of her ambassadress: so she came in person, and ordered Briggs out of the room. And expressing her approval of Rebecca's conduct, she asked particulars of the interview and the previous transactions which had brought about the astonishing offer of Sir Pitt.

Rebecca said she had long had some notion of the partiality with which Sir Pitt honoured her, (for he was in the habit of making his feelings known in a very frank and unreserved manner) but, not to mention private reasons with which she would not for the present trouble Miss Crawley, Sir Pitt's age, station, and habits were such as to render a marriage quite impossible; and could a woman with any feeling of self-respect and any decency listen to proposals at such a moment, when the funeral of the lover's deceased wife had not actually taken place?

"Nonsense, my dear, you would never have refused him had there not been some one else in the case," Miss Crawley said, coming to her point at once. "Tell me the private reasons; what are the private reasons? There *is* some one; who is it that has touched your heart?"

Rebecca cast down her eyes, and owned there was. "You have guessed right, dear Lady," she said with a sweet simple faltering voice. "You wonder at one so poor and friendless having an attachment, don't you? I have never heard that poverty was any safeguard against it. I wish it were."

"My poor dear child," cried Miss Crawley, who was always quite ready to be sentimental, "Is our passion unrequited, then? Are we pining in secret? Tell me all, and let me console you."

"I wish you could, dear Madam," Rebecca said in the same tearful tone. "Indeed, indeed I need it." And she laid her head upon Miss Crawley's shoulder and wept there so naturally that the old lady, surprised into sympathy, embraced her with an almost maternal kindness, uttered many soothing protests of regard and affection for her, vowed that she loved her as a daughter, and would do everything in her power to serve her. And now who is it, my dear? Is it that pretty Miss Sedley's brother? You said something about an affair with him. I'll ask him here, my dear. And you shall have him: indeed you shall."

"Don't ask me now," Rebecca said. "You shall know all soon. Indeed you shall. Dear kind Miss Crawley—Dear friend, may I say so?"

"That you may, my child," the old lady replied, kissing her.

"I can't tell you now," sobbed out Rebecca, "I am very miserable.

But O! love me always—promise you will love me always." And in the midst of mutual tears—for the emotions of the younger woman had awakened the sympathies of the elder—this promise was solemnly given by Miss Crawley, who left her little protégée, blessing and admiring her as a dear, artless, tender-hearted, affectionate, incomprehensible creature.

And now she was left alone to think over the sudden and wonderful events of the day, and of what had been and what might have been. What think you were the private feelings of Miss, no, (begging her pardon) of Mrs. Rebecca? If, a few pages back, the present writer claimed the privilege of peeping into Miss Amelia Sedley's bed-room, and understanding with the omniscience of the novelist all the gentle pains and passions which were tossing upon that innocent pillow, why should he not declare himself to be Rebecca's confidante too, master of her secrets, and seal-keeper of that young woman's conscience?

Well then, in the first place, Rebecca gave way to some very sincere and touching regrets that a piece of marvellous good fortune should have been so near her, and she actually obliged to decline it. In this natural emotion every properly regulated mind will certainly share. What good mother is there that would not commiserate a penniless spinster, who might have been my lady, and have shared four thousand a year? What well-bred young person is there in all Vanity Fair, who will not feel for a hard-working, ingenious, meritorious girl, who gets such an honourable, advantageous, provoking offer, just at the very moment when it is out of her power to accept it? I am sure our friend Becky's disappointment deserves and will command every sympathy.

I remember one night being in the Fair myself, at an evening party. I observed old Miss Toady there also present, single out for her special attentions and flattery little Mrs. Briefless, the barrister's wife, who is of a good family certainly, but, as we all know, is as poor as poor can be.

What, I asked in my own mind, can cause this obsequiousness on the part of Miss Toady; has Briefless got a county court, or has his wife had a fortune left her? Miss Toady explained presently, with that simplicity which distinguishes all her conduct. 'You know, she said, Mrs. Briefless is granddaughter of Sir John Redhand, who is so ill at Cheltenham that he can't last six months. Mrs. Briefless's papa, succeeds; so you see she *will* be a baronet's daughter.' And Toady asked Briefless and his wife to dinner the very next week.

If the mere chance of becoming a baronet's daughter can procure a lady such homage in the world, surely, surely we may respect the agonies of a young woman who has lost the opportunity of becoming a baronet's wife. Who would have dreamed of Lady Crawley dying so soon? She was one of those sickly women that might have lasted these ten years—Rebecca thought to herself, in all the woes of repentance—and I might have been my lady! I might have led that old man whither I would. I might have thanked Mrs. Bute for her patronage, and Mr. Pitt for his insufferable condescension. I would have had the town-house newly furnished and decorated. I would have had the handsomest carriage in London, and a

box at the Opera; and I would have been presented next season. All this *might* have been; but now—now all was doubt and mystery.

But Rebecca was a young lady of too much resolution and energy of character to permit herself much useless and unseemly sorrow for the irrevocable past; so, having devoted only the proper portion of regret to it, she wisely turned her whole attention towards the future, which was now vastly more important to her. And she surveyed her position, and its hopes, doubts, and chances.

In the first place, she was *married*;—that was a great fact. Sir Pitt knew it. She was not so much surprised into the avowal, as induced to make it by a sudden calculation. It must have come some day; and why not now as at a later period? He who would have married her himself must at least be silent with regard to her marriage. But how Miss Crawley would bear the news—was the great question. Misgivings Rebecca had; but she remembered all Miss Crawley had said; the old lady's avowed contempt for birth; her daring liberal opinions; her general romantic propensities; her almost doting attachment to her nephew, and her repeatedly-expressed fondness for Rebecca herself. She is so fond of him, Rebecca thought, that she will forgive him anything: she is so used to me that I don't think she could be comfortable without me: when the *éclaircissement* comes there will be a scene, and hysterics, and a great quarrel, and then a great reconciliation. At all events, what use was there in delaying? the die was thrown, and now or to-morrow the issue must be the same. And so, resolved that Miss Crawley should have the news, the young person debated in her mind as to the best means of conveying it to her; and whether she should face the storm that must come, or fly and avoid it until its first fury was blown over. In this state of meditation she wrote the following letter:—

Dearest Friend,—The great crisis which we have debated about so often is *come*. Half of my secret is known, and I have thought and thought, until I am quite sure that now is the time to reveal *the whole of the mystery*. Sir Pitt came to me this morning, and made—what do you think?—*a declaration in form*. Think of that! Poor little me. I might have been lady Crawley. How pleased Mrs. Bute would have been; and *ma tante* if I had taken precedence of her! I might have been somebody's mamma, instead of—O, I tremble, I tremble, when I think how soon we must tell all!—

Sir Pitt knows I am married, and not knowing to whom, is not very much displeased as yet. Ma tante is *actually angry* that I should have refused him. But she is all kindness and graciousness. She condescends to say I would have made him a good wife; and vows that she will be a mother to your little Rebecca. She will be shaken when she first hears the news. But need we fear anything beyond a momentary anger? I think not: *I am sure* not. She dotes upon you so (you naughty, good-for-nothing man), that she would pardon you *anything:* and, indeed, I believe, the next place in her heart is mine: and that she would be miserable without me. Dearest! something *tells me* we shall conquer. You shall leave that odious regiment: quit gaming, racing, and *be a good*

boy; and we shall all live in Park Lane: and *ma tante* shall leave us all her money.

I shall try and walk to-morrow at 3 in the usual place. If Miss B. accompanies me, you must come to dinner, and bring an answer, and put it in the third volume of Porteus's Sermons. But, at all events, come to your own. R.

To Miss Eliza Styles,
At Mr. Barnet's, Saddler, Knightsbridge.

And I trust there is no reader of this little story who has not discernment enough to perceive that the Miss Eliza Styles (an old schoolfellow, Rebecca said, with whom she had resumed an active correspondence of late) and who used to fetch these letters from the saddler's, wore brass spurs, and large curling mustachios, and was indeed no other than Captain Rawdon Crawley.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LETTER ON THE PINCUSHION.

OW they were married is not of the slightest consequence to any body. What is to hinder a Captain who is a major, and a young lady who is of age, from purchasing a license, and uniting themselves at any church in this town? Who needs to be told, that if a woman has a will, she will assuredly find a way?—My belief is, that one day, when Miss Sharp had gone to pass the forenoon with her dear friend Miss Amelia Sedley, in Russell-square, a lady very like her might have been seen entering a church in the city, in company with a gentleman with dyed mustachoes, who, after a quarter of an hour's interval, escorted her back to the hackney-coach in waiting, and that this was a quiet bridal party.

And who on earth, after the daily experience we have, can question the probability of a gentleman marrying any body? How many of the wise and learned have married their cooks? Did not Lord Eldon himself, the most prudent of men, make a run-away match? Were not Achilles and Ajax both in love with their servant maids? And are we to expect a heavy dragoon with strong desires and small brains, who had never controlled a passion in his life, to become prudent all of a sudden, and to refuse to pay any price for an indulgence to which he had a mind? If people only made prudent marriages, what a stop to population there would be!

It seems to me, for my part, that Mr. Rawdon's marriage was one of the honestest actions which we shall have to record in any portion of that gentleman's biography which has to do with the present history. No one will say it is unmanly to be captivated by a woman, or, being captivated, to marry her; and the admiration, the delight, the passion, the wonder, the unbounded confidence, and frantic adoration with which, by degrees, this big warrior got to regard the little Rebecca, were feelings which the ladies at least will pronounce were not altogether discreditable to him.

When she sang, every note thrilled in his dull soul, and tingled through his huge frame. When she spoke, he brought all the force of his brains to listen and wonder. If she was jocular, he used to revolve her jokes in his mind, and explode over them half an hour afterwards in the street, to the surprise of the groom in the tilbury by his side, or the comrade riding with him in Rotten Row. Her words were oracles to him, her smallest actions marked by an infallible grace and wisdom. "How she sings,—how she paints," thought he. "How she rode that kicking mare at Queen's Crawley!" And he would say to her in confidential moments, "By Jove, Beck, you're fit to be Commander-in-Chief, or Archbishop of Canterbury, by Jove." Is his case a rare one? and don't we see every day in the world many an honest Hercules at the apron-strings of Omphale, and great whiskered Samsons prostrate in Dalilah's lap?

When, then, Beckey told him that the great crisis was near, and the time for action had arrived, Rawdon expressed himself as ready to act under her orders, as he would be to charge with his troop at the command of his colonel. There was no need for him to put his letter into the third volume of Porteus. Rebecca easily found a means to get rid of Briggs, her companion, and met her faithful friend in "the usual place" on the next day. She had thought over matters at night, and communicated to Rawdon the result of her determinations. He agreed, of course, to every thing; was quite sure that it was all right; that what she proposed was best; that Miss Crawley would infallibly relent, or "come round," as he said, after a time. Had Rebecca's resolutions been entirely different, he would have followed them as implicitly. "You have head enough for both of us, Beck," said he. "You're sure to get us out of the scrape. I never saw your equal, and I've met with some clippers in my time too." And with this simple confession of faith, the love-stricken dragoon left her to execute his part of the project which she had formed for the pair.

It consisted simply in the hiring of quiet lodgings at Brompton, or in the neighbourhood of the barracks, for Captain and Mrs. Crawley. For Rebecca had determined, and very prudently, we think, to fly. Rawdon was only too happy at her resolve; he had been entreating her to take this measure any time for weeks past. He pranced off to engage the lodgings with all the impetuosity of love. He agreed to pay two guineas a week so readily, that the landlady regretted she had asked him so little. He ordered in a piano, and half a nursery house full of flowers, and a heap of good things. As for shawls, kid gloves, silk stockings, gold French watches, bracelets and perfumery, he sent them in with the profusion of blind love and unbounded credit. And having relieved his mind by this outpouring of generosity, he went and dined nervously at the club, waiting until the great moment of his life should come.

The occurrences of the previous day; the admirable conduct of Rebecca in refusing an offer so advantageous to her, the secret unhappiness preying upon her, the sweetness and silence with which she bore her affliction, made Miss Crawley much more tender than usual. An event of this nature, a marriage, or a refusal, or a proposal, thrills through a whole houseful of women, and sets all their hysterical sympathies at work. As

an observer of human nature, I regularly frequent St. George's, Hanover Square, during the genteel marriage season; and though I have never seen the bridegroom's male friends give way to tears, or the beadles and officiating clergy any way affected, yet it is not at all uncommon to see women who are not in the least concerned in the operations going on—old ladies who are long past marrying, stout middle-aged females with plenty of sons and daughters, let alone pretty young creatures in pink bonnets, who are on their promotion, and may naturally take an interest in the ceremony,—I say it is quite common to see the women present piping, sobbing, sniffling, hiding their little faces in their little useless pocket-handkerchiefs, and heaving old and young with emotion. When my friend, the fashionable John Pimlico, married the lovely Lady Belgravia Green Parker, the emotion was so general, that even the little snuffy old pew-opener who let me into the seat, was in tears. And wherefore? I enquired of my own soul: *she* was not going to be married.

Miss Crawley and Briggs in a word, after the affair of Sir Pitt, indulged in the utmost luxury of sentiment, and Rebecca became an object of the most tender interest to them. In her absence Miss Crawley solaced herself with the most sentimental of the novels in her library. Little Sharp, with her secret griefs, was the heroine of the day.

That night Rebecca sang more sweetly and talked more pleasantly than she had ever been heard to do in Park Lane. She twined herself round the heart of Miss Crawley. She spoke lightly and laughingly of Sir Pitt's proposal, ridiculed it as the foolish fancy of an old man; and her eyes filled with tears, and Briggs's heart with unutterable pangs of defeat, as she said she desired no other lot than to remain for ever with her dear benefactress. "My dear little creature," the old lady said, "I don't intend to let you stir for years, that you may depend upon it. As for going back to that odious brother of mine after what has passed, it is out of the question. Here you stay with me and Briggs. Briggs wants to go to see her relations very often. Briggs, you may go when you like. But as for you, my dear, you must stay and take care of the old woman."

If Rawdon Crawley had been then and there present, instead of being at the club nervously drinking claret, the pair might have gone down on their knees before the old spinster, avowed all, and been forgiven in a twinkling. But that good chance was denied to the young couple, doubtless in order that this story might be written, in which numbers of their wonderful adventures are narrated—adventures which could never have occurred to them if they had been housed and sheltered under the comfortable uninteresting forgiveness of Miss Crawley.

Under Mrs. Firkin's orders, in the Park Lane establishment, was a young woman from Hampshire, whose business it was, among other duties, to knock at Miss Sharp's door with that jug of hot water, which Firkin would rather have perished than have presented to the intruder. This girl, bred on the family estate, had a brother in Captain Crawley's troop, and if the truth were known, I daresay it would come out that she was aware of certain arrangements, which have a great deal to do with this history. At any rate she purchased a yellow shawl, a pair of green boots,

and a light blue hat with a red feather, with three guineas which Rebecca gave her, and as little Sharp was by no means too liberal with her money, no doubt it was for services rendered that Betty Martin was so bribed.

On the second day after Sir Pitt Crawley's offer to Miss Sharp, the sun rose as usual, and at the usual hour Betty Martin, the upstairs maid, knocked at the door of the governess's bed-chamber.

No answer was returned, and she knocked again. Silence was still uninterrupted; and Betty, with the hot water, opened the door and entered the chamber.

The little white dimity bed was as smooth and trim as on the day previous when Betty's own hands had helped to make it. Two little trunks were corded in one end of the room; and on the table before the window—on the pincushion—the great fat pincushion lined with pink inside, and twilled like a lady's nightcap—lay a letter. It had been reposing there probably all night.

Betty advanced towards it on tiptoe, as if she were afraid to awake it—looked at it, and round the room with an air of great wonder and satisfaction, took up the letter, and grinned intensely as she turned it round and over, and finally carried it in to Miss Briggs's room below.

How could Betty tell that the letter was for Miss Briggs, I should like to know? All the schooling Betty had was at Mrs. Bute Crawley's Sunday School, and she could no more read writing than Hebrew.

"La, Miss Briggs," the girl exclaimed, "O, Miss, something must have happened—there's nobody in Miss Sharp's room; the bed aint been slep in, and she 've run away, and left this letter for you, Miss."

"*What!*" cries Briggs, dropping her comb, the thin wisp of faded hair falling over her shoulders; "an elopement! Miss Sharp a fugitive! What, what is this?" and she eagerly broke the neat seal, and, as they say, "devoured the contents" of the letter addressed to her.

"Dear Miss Briggs," the refugee wrote, "the kindest heart in the world as yours is, will pity and sympathise with me and excuse me. With tears, and prayers, and blessings, I leave the home where the poor orphan has ever met with kindness and affection. Claims even superior to those of my benefactress call me hence. I go to my duty—to my *husband*. Yes, I am married. My husband *commands* me to seek the *humble home* which we call ours. Dearest Miss Briggs, break the news as your delicate sympathy will know how to do it—to my dear, my beloved friend and benefactress. Tell her, ere I went, I shed tears on her dear pillow—that pillow that I have so often soothed in sickness—that I long *again* to watch—Oh, with what joy shall I return to dear Park Lane! How I tremble for the answer which is to *seal my fate!* When Sir Pitt deigned to offer me his hand, an honour of which my beloved Miss Crawley said I was *deserving*, (my blessings go with her for judging the poor orphan worthy to be *her sister!*), I told Sir Pitt that I was *already a wife*. Even he forgave me. But my courage failed me, when I should have told him all—that I could not be his wife, for I *was his daughter!* I am wedded to the best and most generous of men—Miss Crawley's Rawdon is *my* Rawdon. At his *command* I open my lips, and follow him to our humble home, as I would *through the*

world. O, my excellent and kind friend, intercede with my Rawdon's beloved aunt for him and the poor girl to whom all *his noble race* have shown such *unparalleled affection.* Ask Miss Crawley to receive *her children.* I can say no more, but blessings, blessings on all in the dear house I leave, prays

"Your affectionate and *grateful,*

"Midnight." "REBECCA CRAWLEY."

Just as Briggs had finished reading this affecting and interesting document, which reinstated her in her position as first confidante of Miss Crawley, Mrs. Firkin entered the room. "Here's Mrs. Bute Crawley just arrived by the mail from Hampshire, and wants some tea, will you come down and make breakfast, Miss?"

And to the surprise of Firkin, clasping her dressing-gown around her, the wisp of hair floating dishevelled behind her, the little curl-papers still sticking in bunches round her forehead, Briggs sailed down to Mrs. Bute with the letter in her hand containing the wonderful news.

"Oh, Mrs. Firkin," gasped Betty, "sech a business. Miss Sharp have a gone and run away with the Capting, and they're off to Gretny Green!" We would devote a chapter to describe the emotions of Mrs. Firkin, did not the passions of her mistresses occupy our genteeler muse.

When Mrs. Bute Crawley, numbed with midnight travelling, and warming herself at the newly crackling parlour fire, heard from Miss Briggs the intelligence of the clandestine marriage, she declared it was quite providential that she should have arrived at such a time to assist poor dear Miss Crawley in supporting the shock—that Rebecca was an artful little hussy of whom she had always had her suspicions; and that as for Rawdon Crawley, she never could account for his aunt's infatuation regarding him, and had long considered him a profligate, lost, and abandoned being. And this awful conduct, Mrs. Bute said, will have at least *this* good effect, it will open poor dear Miss Crawley's eyes to the real character of this wicked man. Then Mrs. Bute had a comfortable hot toast and tea; and as there was a vacant room in the house now, there was no need for her to remain at the Gloster Coffee House where the Portsmouth mail had set her down, and whence she ordered Mr. Bowls's aide-de-camp the footman to bring away her trunks.

Miss Crawley, be it known, did not leave her room until near noon—taking chocolate in bed in the morning, while Becky Sharp read the Morning Post to her, or otherwise amusing herself or dawdling. The conspirators below agreed that they would spare the dear lady's feelings until she appeared in her drawing-room: meanwhile it was announced to her, that Mrs. Bute Crawley had come up from Hampshire by the mail, was staying at the Gloster, sent her love to Miss Crawley, and asked for breakfast with Miss Briggs. The arrival of Mrs. Bute, which would not have caused any extreme delight at another period, was hailed with pleasure now; Miss Crawley being pleased at the notion of a gossip with her sister-in-law regarding the late Lady Crawley, the funeral arrangements pending, and Sir Pitt's abrupt proposals to Rebecca.

It was not until the old lady was fairly ensconced in her usual arm-chair in the drawing-room, and the preliminary embraces and inquiries had taken place between the ladies, that the conspirators thought it advisable to submit her to the operation. Who has not admired the artifices and delicate approaches with which women "prepare" their friends for bad news? Miss Crawley's two friends made such an apparatus of mystery before they broke the intelligence to her, that they worked her up to the necessary degree of doubt and alarm.

"And she refused Sir Pitt, my dear dear Miss Crawley, prepare yourself for it," Mrs. Bute said, "because—because she couldn't help herself."

"Of course there was a reason," Miss Crawley answered. "She liked somebody else. I told Briggs so yesterday."

"*Likes* somebody else!" Briggs gasped. "O my dear friend, she is married already."

"Married already," Mrs. Bute chimed in; and both sate with clasped hands looking from each other at their victim.

"Send her to me, the instant she comes in. The little sly wretch: how dared she not tell me?" cried out Miss Crawley.

"She won't come in soon. Prepare yourself, dear friend—she 's gone out for a long time—she 's—she 's gone altogether."

"Gracious goodness, and who 's to make my chocolate? Send for her and have her back; I desire that she come back," the old lady said.

"She decamped last night, Ma'am," cried Mrs. Bute.

"She left a letter for me," Briggs exclaimed. "She 's married to—"

"Prepare her, for heaven's sake. Don't torture her, my dear Miss Briggs."

"She 's married to whom?" cries the spinster in a nervous fury.

"To—to a relation of ——".

"She refused Sir Pitt," cried the victim. "Speak at once. Don't drive me mad."

"O Ma'am—prepare her, Miss Briggs—she 's married to Rawdon Crawley."

"Rawdon married—Rebecca—governess—nobod—Get out of my house, you fool, you idiot—you stupid old Briggs—how dare you? You 're in the plot—you made him marry, thinking that I 'd leave my money from him—you did, Martha," the poor old lady screamed in hysteric sentences.

"I, Ma'am, ask a member of this family to marry a drawing-master's daughter?"

"Her mother was a Montmorency," cried out the old lady, pulling at the bell with all her might.

"Her mother was an opera girl, and she has been on the stage or worse herself," said Mrs. Bute.

Miss Crawley gave a final scream, and fell back in a faint. They were forced to take her back to the room which she had just quitted. One fit of hysterics succeeded another. The doctor was sent for—the apothecary arrived. Mrs. Bute took up the post of nurse by her bedside. "Her relations ought to be round about her," that amiable woman said.

She had scarcely been carried up to her room, when a new person

arrived to whom it was also necessary to break the news. This was Sir Pitt. "Where 's Becky?" he said, coming in. "Where 's her traps? She 's coming with me to Queen's Crawley."

"Have you not heard the astonishing intelligence regarding her surreptitious union?" Briggs asked.

"What 's that to me?" Sir Pitt asked. "I know she 's married. That makes no odds. Tell her to come down at once, and not keep me."

"Are you not aware, Sir," Miss Briggs asked, "that she has left our roof, to the dismay of Miss Crawley, who is nearly killed by the intelligence of Captain Rawdon's union with her?"

When Sir Pitt Crawley heard that Rebecca was married to his son, he broke out into a fury of language, which it would do no good to repeat in this place, as indeed it sent poor Briggs shuddering out of the room; and with her we will shut the door upon the figure of the frenzied old man, wild with hatred and insane with baffled desire.

One day after he went to Queen's Crawley, he burst like a madman into the room she had used when there—dashed open her boxes with his foot, and flung about her papers, clothes, and other relics. Miss Horrocks, the butler's daughter, took some of them. The children dressed themselves and acted plays in the others. It was but a few days after the poor mother had gone to her lonely burying-place; and was laid, unwept and disregarded, in a vault full of strangers.

"Suppose the old lady doesn't come to," Rawdon said to his little wife, as they sate together in the snug little Brompton lodgings. She had been trying the new piano all the morning. The new gloves fitted her to a nicety; the new shawls became her wonderfully; the new rings glittered on her little hands, and the new watch ticked at her waist; "suppose she don't come round, eh, Becky?"

"*I'll* make your fortune," she said; and Dalilah patted Samson's cheek.

"You can do anything," he said, kissing the little hand. "By Jove, you can; and we 'll drive down to the Star and Garter, and dine, by Jove."

CHAPTER XVII.

HOW CAPTAIN DOBBIN BOUGHT A PIANO.

IF there is any exhibition in all Vanity Fair which Satire and Sentiment can visit arm in arm together; where you light on the strangest contrasts laughable and tearful: where you may be gentle and pathetic, or savage and cynical with perfect propriety: it is at one of those public assemblies, a crowd of which are advertised every day in the last page of the Times newspaper, and over which the late Mr. George Robins used to preside with so much dignity. There are very few London people, as I fancy, who have not attended at these meetings, and all with a taste for moralizing must have thought, with a sensation and interest not a little startling and queer, of the day when their turn shall come too, and Mr. Hammerdown will sell by the orders of Diogenes's assignees, or will be instructed by the executors, to offer to public competition, the library, furniture, plate, wardrobe, and choice cellar of wines of Epicurus deceased.

Even with the most selfish disposition, the Vanity-fairian, as he witnesses this sordid part of the obsequies of a departed friend, can't but feel some sympathies and regret. My Lord Dives's remains are in the family vault: the statuaries are cutting an inscription veraciously commemorating his virtues, and the sorrows of his heir, who is disposing of his goods. What guest at Dives's table can pass the familiar house without a sigh?—the familiar house of which the lights use to shine so cheerfully at seven o'clock, of which the hall-doors opened so readily, of which the obsequious servants, as you passed up the comfortable stair, sounded your name from landing to landing, until it reached the apartment where jolly old Dives welcomed his friends! What a number of them he had; and what a noble way of entertaining them. How witty people used to be here who were morose when they got out of the door; and how courteous and friendly men who slandered and hated each other every where else! He was pompous, but with such a cook what would one not swallow? he was rather dull, perhaps, but would not such wine make any conversation pleasant? We must get some of his Burgundy at any price, the mourners cry at his club. "I got this box at old Dives's sale," Pincher says, handing it round, "one of Louis XV.'s mistresses—pretty thing, is it not—sweet miniature," and they talk of the way in which young Dives is dissipating his fortune.

How changed the house is, though! The front is patched over with bills, setting forth the particulars of the furniture in staring capitals. They have hung a shred of carpet out of an upstairs window—a half dozen of

porters are lounging on the dirty steps—the hall swarms with dingy guests of oriental countenance, who thrust printed cards into your hand, and offer to bid. Old women and amateurs have invaded the upper apartments, pinching the bed curtains, poking into the feathers, shampooing the mattresses, and clapping the wardrobe drawers to and fro. Enterprising young housekeepers are measuring the looking glasses and hangings to see if they will suit the new ménage.—(Snob will brag for years that he has purchased this or that at Dives's sale,) and Mr. Hammerdown is sitting on the great mahogany dining-tables, in the dining-room below, waving the ivory hammer, and employing all the artifices of eloquence, enthusiasm, entreaty, reason, despair; shouting to his people; satirizing Mr. Davids for his sluggishness; inspiriting Mrs. Moss into action; imploring, commanding, bellowing, until down comes the hammer like fate, and we pass to the next lot. O Dives, who would ever have thought, as we sat round the broad table sparkling with plate and spotless linen, ever to have seen such a dish at the head of it as that roaring auctioneer?

It was rather late in the sale. The excellent drawing-room furniture by the best makers; the rare and famous wines selected, regardless of cost, and with the well known taste of the purchaser; the rich and complete set of family plate had been sold on the previous days. Certain of the best wines (which all had a great character among amateurs in the neighbourhood) had been purchased for his master, who knew them very well, by the butler of our friend John Osborne, Esquire, of Russell Square. A small portion of the most useful articles of the plate had been bought by some young stock-brokers from the city. And now the public being invited to the purchase of minor objects, it happened that the orator on the table was expatiating on the merits of a picture, which he sought to recommend to his audience: it was by no means so select or numerous a company as had attended the previous days of the auction.

"No. 369," roared Mr. Hammerdown. "Portrait of a gentleman on an elephant. Who 'll bid for the gentleman on the elephant? Lift up the picture, Blowman, and let the company examine this lot." A long, pale, military-looking gentleman, seated demurely at the mahogany table, could not help grinning as this valuable lot was shown by Mr. Blowman. "Turn the elephant to the Captain, Blowman. What shall we say, sir, for the elephant?" but the Captain, blushing in a very hurried and discomfited manner, turned away his head, and the auctioneer repeated his discomposure.

"Shall we say twenty guineas for this work of art?—fifteen, five, name your own price. The gentleman without the elephant is worth five pound."

"I wonder it aint come down with him," said a professional wag, "he's any how a precious big one;" at which (for the elephant-rider was represented as of a very stout figure) there was a general giggle in the room.

"Don't be trying to deprecate the value of the lot, Mr. Moss," Mr. Hammerdown said; "let the company examine it as a work of art—the attitude of the gallant animal quite according to natur; the gentleman in a nankeen-jacket, his gun in his hand is going to the chace; in the distance a banyhann-tree and a pagody, most likely resemblances of some

interesting spot in our famous Eastern possessions. How much for this lot? Come, gentlemen, don't keep me here all day."

Some one bid five shillings, at which the military gentleman looked towards the quarter from which this splendid offer had come; and there saw another officer with a young lady on his arm, who both appeared to be highly amused with the scene, and to whom, finally, this lot was knocked

down for half-a-guinea. He at the table looked more surprised and discomposed than ever when he spied this pair, and his head sank into his military collar, and he turned his back upon them, so as to avoid them altogether.

Of all the other articles which Mr. Hammerdown had the honour to offer for public competition that day it is not our purpose to make mention, save of one only; this was a little square piano which came down from the upper regions of the house (the state grand piano having been disposed of previously); this the young lady tried with a rapid and skilful hand, (making the officer blush and start again), and for it, when its turn came, her agent began to bid.

But there was an opposition here. The Hebrew aide-de-camp in the service of the officer at the table bid against the Hebrew gentleman employed by the elephant purchasers, and a brisk battle ensued over this little piano, the combatants being greatly encouraged by Mr. Hammerdown.

At last, when the competition had been prolonged for some time, the elephant captain and lady desisted from the race; and the hammer coming down, the auctioneer said:—"Mr. Lewis, twenty-five," and Mr. Lewis's chief thus became the proprietor of the little square piano. Having effected the purchase, he sate up as if he was greatly relieved, and the unsuccessful competitors catching a glimpse of him at this moment, the lady said to her friend,

"Why, Rawdon, it's Captain Dobbin."

I suppose Becky was discontented with the new piano her husband had hired for her, or perhaps the proprietors of that instrument had fetched it away, declining farther credit, or perhaps she had a particular attachment for the one which she had first tried to purchase, recollecting it in old

days, when she used to play upon it, in the little sitting-room of our dear Amelia Sedley.

The sale was at the old house in Russell Square, where we passed some evenings together at the beginning of this story. Good old John Sedley was a ruined man. His name had been proclaimed as a defaulter on the Stock Exchange, and his bankruptcy and commercial extermination had followed. Mr. Osborne's butler came to buy some of the famous port wine to transfer to the cellars over the way. As for one dozen well-manufactured silver spoons and forks at per oz., and one dozen dessert ditto ditto, there were three young stockbrokers (Messrs. Dale, Spiggot, and Dale, of Threadneedle street, indeed), who having had dealings with the old man, and kindnesses from him in days when he was kind to every body with whom he dealt, sent this little spar out of the wreck with their love to good Mrs. Sedley; and with respect to the piano, as it had been Amelia's, and as she might miss it and want one now, and as Captain William Dobbin could no more play upon it, than he could dance on the tight-rope, it is probable that he did not purchase it for his own use.

In a word, it arrived that evening, at a wonderful small cottage in a street leading from the Fulham Road—one of those streets which have the finest romantic names—(this was called St. Adelaide Villas, Anna-Maria Road, West), where the houses look like baby-houses; where the people looking out of the first-floor windows, must infallibly, as you think, sit with their feet in the parlours; where the shrubs in the little gardens in front, bloom with a perennial display of little children's pinafores, little red socks, caps, &c. (polyandria polygynia); whence you hear the sound of jingling spinets and women singing; where little porter pots hang on the railings sunning themselves; whither of evenings you see city clerks padding wearily: here it was that Mr. Clapp, the clerk of Mr. Sedley, had his domicile, and in this asylum the good old gentleman hid his head with his wife and daughter when the crash came.

Jos Sedley had acted as a man of his disposition would, when the announcement of the family-misfortune reached him. He did not come to London, but he wrote to his mother to draw upon his agents for whatever money was wanted, so that his kind broken-spirited old parents had no present poverty to fear. This done, Jos went on at the boarding-house at Cheltenham pretty much as before. He drove his curricle; he drank his claret; he played his rubber; he told his Indian stories, and the Irish widow consoled and flattered him as usual. His present of money, needful as it was, made little impression on his parents; and I have heard Amelia say, that the first day on which she saw her father lift up his head after the failure, was on the receipt of the packet of forks and spoons with the young stockbroker's love, over which he burst out, crying like a child, being greatly more affected than even his wife, to whom the present was addressed. Edward Dale, the junior of the house, who purchased the spoons for the firm, was, in fact, very sweet upon Amelia, and offered for her in spite of all. He married Miss Louisa Cutts (daughter of Higham and Cutts, the eminent corn-factors), with a handsome fortune in 1820; and is now living in splendour, and with a numerous family, at his elegant

villa, Muswell Hill. But we must not let the recollections of this good fellow cause us to diverge from the plain and principal history.

I hope the reader has much too good an opinion of Captain and Mrs. Crawley to suppose that they ever would have dreamed of paying a visit to so remote a district as Bloomsbury, if they thought the family whom they proposed to honour with a visit were not merely out of fashion, but out of money, and could be serviceable to them in no possible manner. Rebecca was entirely surprised at the sight of the comfortable old house where she had met with no small kindness, ransacked by brokers and bargainers, and its quiet family treasures given up to public desecration and plunder. A month after her flight, she had bethought her of Amelia, and Rawdon, with a horse laugh, had expressed a perfect willingness to see young George Osborne again. "He's a very agreeable acquaintance, Beck," the wag added. "I'd like to sell him another horse, Beck. I'd like to play a few more games at billiards with him. He'd be what I call *useful* just now, Mrs. C.—ha, ha!" by which sort of speech it is not to be supposed that Rawdon Crawley had a deliberate desire to cheat Mr. Osborne at play, but only wished to take that fair advantage of him which almost every sporting gentleman in Vanity Fair considers to be his due from his neighbour.

The old Aunt was long in "coming-to." A month had elapsed. Rawdon was denied the door by Mr. Bowls; his servants could not get a lodgement in the house at Park Lane; his letters were sent back unopened. Miss Crawley never stirred out—she was unwell—and Mrs. Bute remained still and never left her. Crawley and his wife both of them augured evil from the continued presence of Mrs. Bute.

"Gad, I begin to perceive now why she was always bringing us together at Queen's Crawley," Rawdon said.

"What an artful little woman!" ejaculated Rebecca.

"Well, *I* don't regret it, if you don't," the Captain cried, still in an amorous rapture with his wife, who rewarded him with a kiss by way of reply, and was indeed not a little gratified by the generous confidence of her husband.

"If he had but a little more brains," she thought to herself, "I might make something of him;" but she never let him perceive the opinion she had of him; listened with indefatigable complacency to his stories of the stable and the mess; laughed at all his jokes; felt the greatest interest in Jack Spatterdash, whose cab-horse had come down, and Bob Martingale, who had been taken up in a gambling-house, and Tom Cinqbars, who was going to ride the steeple-chase. When he came home she was alert and happy: when he went out she pressed him to go: when he stayed at home, she played and sang for him, made him good drinks, superintended his dinner, warmed his slippers, and steeped his soul in comfort. The best of women (I have heard my grandmother say) are hypocrites. We don't know how much they hide from us: how watchful they are when they seem most artless and confidential: how often those frank smiles which they wear so easily, are traps to cajole or elude or disarm—I don't mean in your mere coquettes, but your domestic models, and paragons of female virtue. Who has not seen a woman hide the dulness of a stupid husband, or coax the

fury of a savage one? We accept this amiable slavishness, and praise a woman for it: we call this pretty treachery truth. A good housewife is of necessity a humbug; and Cornelia's husband was hoodwinked, as Potiphar was—only in a different way.

By these attentions, that veteran rake, Rawdon Crawley, found himself converted into a very happy and submissive married man. His former haunts knew him not. They asked about him once or twice at his clubs, but did not miss him much: in those booths of Vanity Fair people seldom do miss each other. His secluded wife ever smiling and cheerful, his little comfortable lodgings, snug meals, and homely evenings, had all the charms of novelty and secrecy. The marriage was not yet declared to the world, or published in the Morning Post. All his creditors would have come rushing on him in a body, had they known that he was united to a woman without fortune. "My relations won't cry fie upon me," Becky said, with rather a bitter laugh; and she was quite contented to wait until the old aunt should be reconciled, before she claimed her place in society. So she lived at Brompton, and meanwhile saw no one, or only those few of her husband's male companions who were admitted into her little dining-room. These were all charmed with her. The little dinners, the laughing and chatting, the music afterwards, delighted all who participated in these enjoyments. Major Martingale never thought about asking to see the marriage license. Captain Cinqbars was perfectly enchanted with her skill in making punch. Young Cornet and Lieutenant Spatterdash (who was fond of piquet, and whom Crawley would often invite) was evidently and quickly smitten by Mrs. Crawley; but her own circumspection and modesty never forsook her for a moment, and Crawley's reputation as a fire-eating and jealous warrior, was a further and complete defence to his little wife.

There are gentlemen of very good blood and fashion in this city, who never have entered a lady's drawing-room; so that though Rawdon Crawley's marriage might be talked about in his county, where, of course, Mrs. Bute had spread the news, in London it was doubted, or not heeded, or not talked about at all. He lived comfortably on credit. He had a a large capital of debts, which laid out judiciously, will carry a man along for many years, and on which certain men about town contrive to live a hundred times better than even men with ready money can do. Indeed who is there that walks London streets, but can point out a half-dozen of men riding by him splendidly, while he is on foot, courted by fashion, bowed into their carriages by tradesmen, denying themselves nothing, and living on who knows what? We see Jack Thriftless prancing in the park, or darting in his brougham down Pall Mall: we eat his dinners served on his miraculous plate, "How did this begin, we say, or where will it end?" "My dear fellow," I heard Jack once say, "I owe money in every capital in Europe." The end must come some day, but in the mean time Jack thrives as much as ever; people are glad enough to shake him by the hand, ignore the little dark stories that are whispered every now and then against him, and pronounce him a good-natured, jovial, reckless fellow.

Truth obliges us to confess that Rebecca had married a gentleman of this order. Everything was plentiful in his house but ready money, of which their *ménage* pretty early felt the want; and reading the Gazette

one day, and coming upon the announcement of "Lieutenant G. Osborne to be Captain by purchase, vice Smith, who exchanges," Rawdon uttered that sentiment regarding Amelia's lover, which ended in the visit to Russell Square.

When Rawdon and his wife wished to communicate with Captain Dobbin at the sale, and to know particulars of the catastrophe which had befallen Rebecca's old acquaintances, the Captain had vanished; and such information as they got, was from a stray porter or broker at the auction.

"Look at them with their hooked beaks," Becky said, getting into the buggy, her picture under her arm in great glee. "They 're like vultures after a battle."

"Don't know. Never was in action, my dear. Ask Martingale, he was in Spain, aide-de-camp to General Blazes."

"He was a very kind old man, Mr. Sedley," Rebecca said; "I 'm really sorry he 's gone wrong."

"O stockbrokers—bankrupts—used to it, you know." Rawdon replied, cutting a fly off the horse's ear.

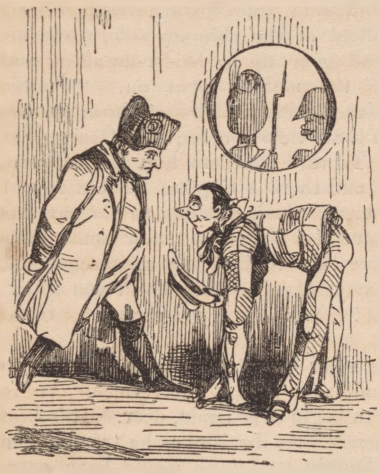
"I wish we could have afforded some of the plate, Rawdon," the wife continued sentimentally. "Five-and-twenty guineas was monstrously dear for that little piano. We chose it at Broadwood's for Amelia, when she came from school. It only cost five-and-thirty then."

"What d'ye-call'em 'Osborne,' will cry off now, I suppose, since the family is smashed. How cut up your pretty little friend will be; hey, Becky?"

"I daresay she 'll recover it;" Becky said, with a smile—and they drove on and talked about something else.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHO PLAYED ON THE PIANO CAPTAIN DOBBIN BOUGHT?



OUR surprised story now finds itself for a moment among very famous events and personages, and hanging on to the skirts of history. When the eagles of Napoleon Bonaparte, the Corsican upstart, were flying from Provence, where they had perched after a brief sojourn in Elba, and from steeple to steeple until they reached the towers of Notre Dame, I wonder whether the Imperial birds had any eye for a little corner of the parish of Bloomsbury, London, which you might have thought so quiet, that even the whirring and flapping of those mighty wings would pass unobserved there?

"Napoleon has landed at Cannes." Such news might create a panic at Vienna, and cause Russia to drop his cards, and take Prussia into a corner, and Talleyrand and Metternich to wag their heads together, while Prince Hardenberg, and even the present Marquis of Londonderry, were puzzled; but how was this intelligence to affect a young lady in Russell Square, before whose door the watchman sang the hours when she was asleep: who, if she strolled in the square, was guarded there by the railings and the beadle: who, if she walked ever so short a distance to buy a ribbon in Southampton Row, was followed by black Sambo with an enormous cane: who was always cared for, dressed, put to bed, and watched over by ever so many guardian angels, with and without wages. Bon Dieu, I say, is it not hard that the fateful rush of the great Imperial struggle can't take place without affecting a poor little harmless girl of eighteen, who is occupied in billing and cooing, or working muslin collars in Russell Square? You, too, kindly, homely flower!—is the great roaring war tempest coming to sweep you down, here, although cowering under the shelter of Holborn? Yes; Napoleon is flinging his last stake, and poor little Emmy Sedley's happiness forms, somehow, part of it.

In the first place, her father's fortune was swept down with that fatal news. All his speculations had of late gone wrong with the luckless

old gentleman. Ventures had failed: merchants had broken: funds had risen when he calculated they would fall. What need to particularize? If success is rare and slow, everybody knows how quick and easy ruin is. Old Sedley had kept his own sad counsel. Everything seemed to go on as usual in the quiet, opulent house: the good-natured mistress pursuing, quite unsuspiciously, her bustling idleness, and daily easy avocations; the daughter absorbed still in one selfish, tender thought, and quite regardless of all the world besides, when that final crash came under which this worthy family fell.

One night Mrs. Sedley was writing cards for a party; the Osbornes had given one, and she must not be behindhand; John Sedley, who had come home very late from the city, sate silent at the chimney side, while his wife was prattling to him; Emmy had gone up to her room ailing and low-spirited. "She 's not happy," the mother went on. "George Osborne neglects her. I 've no patience with the airs of those people. The girls have not been in the house these three weeks; and George has been twice in town without coming. Edward Dale saw him at the Opera. Edward would marry her I 'm sure; and there 's Captain Dobbin who, I think, would—only I hate all army men. Such a dandy as George has become. With his military airs, indeed! We must show some folks that we 're as good as they. Only give Edward Dale any encouragement, and you 'll see. We must have a party, Mr. S. Why don't you speak, John? Shall I say Tuesday fortnight? Why don't you answer? Good God, John, what has happened?"

John Sedley sprang up out of his chair to meet his wife, who ran to him. He seized her in his arms, and said with a hasty voice, "We're ruined, Mary. We've got the world to begin over again, dear. It 's best that you should know all, and at once." As he spoke, he trembled in every limb, and almost fell. He thought the news would have overpowered his wife—his wife, to whom he had never said a hard word. But it was he that was the most moved, sudden as the shock was to her. When he sank back into his seat, it was the wife that took the office of consoler. She took his honest, kind hand, and kissed it, and put it round her neck: she called him her John—her dear John—her old man—her kind old man: she poured out a hundred words of incoherent love and tenderness; her faithful voice and simple caresses wrought this kind heart up to an inexpressible delight and anguish, and cheered and solaced his overburdened soul.

Only once in the course of the long night as they sate together, and poor Sedley opened his pent-up soul, and told the story of his losses and embarrassments—the treason of some of his oldest friends, the manly kindness of some from whom he never could have expected it—in a general confession—only once did the faithful wife give way to emotion.

"My God, my God, it will break Emmy's heart," she said.

The father had forgotten the poor girl. She was lying, awake and unhappy, overhead. In the midst of friends, home, and kind parents, she was alone. To how many people can any one tell all? Who will be open where there is no sympathy, or has call to speak to those who never

can understand? Our gentle Amelia was thus solitary. She had no confidante, so to speak, ever since she had anything to confide. She could not tell the good mother her doubts and cares: the would-be sisters seemed every day more strange to her. And she had misgivings and fears which she dared not acknowledge to herself, though she was always secretly brooding over them.

Her heart tried to persist in asserting that George Osborne was worthy and faithful to her, though she knew otherwise. How many a thing had she said, and got no echo from him. How many suspicions of selfishness and indifference had she to encounter and obstinately overcome. To whom could the poor little martyr tell these daily struggles and tortures? Her hero himself only half understood her. She did not dare to own that the man she loved was her inferior; or to feel that she had given her heart away too soon. Given once, the pure bashful maiden was too modest, too tender, too trustful, too weak, too much woman to recal it. We are Turks with the affections of our women; and have made them subscribe to our doctrine too. We let their bodies go abroad liberally enough, with smiles and ringlets and pink bonnets to disguise them instead of veils and yakmaks. But their souls must be seen by only one man, and they obey not unwillingly, and consent to remain at home as our slaves—ministering to us and doing drudgery for us.

So imprisoned and tortured was this gentle little heart, when in the month of March, Anno Domino 1815, Napoleon landed at Cannes, and Louis XVIII. fled, and all Europe was in alarm, and the funds fell, and good old John Sedley was ruined.

We are not going to follow the worthy old stockbroker through those last pangs and agonies of ruin through which he passed before his commercial demise befel. They declared him at the Stock Exchange; he was absent from his house of business: his bills were protested: his act of bankruptcy formal. The house and furniture of Russell Square were seized and sold up, and he and his family were thrust away, as we have seen, to hide their heads where they might.

John Sedley had not the heart to review the domestic establishment who have appeared now and anon in our pages, and of whom he was now forced by poverty to take leave. The wages of those worthy people were discharged with that punctuality which men frequently show who only owe in great sums—they were sorry to leave good places—but they did not break their hearts at parting from their adored master and mistress. Amelia's maid was profuse in condolences, but went off quite resigned to better herself in a genteeler quarter of the town. Black Sambo, with the infatuation of his profession, determined on setting up a public-house. Honest old Mrs. Blenkinsop indeed, who had seen the birth of Jos and Amelia, and the wooing of John Sedley and his wife, was for staying by them without wages, having amassed a considerable sum in their service: and she accompanied the fallen people into their new and humble place of refuge, where she tended them and grumbled against them for a while.

Of all Sedley's opponents in his debates with his creditors which now

ensued, and harassed the feelings of the good kindly old gentleman so severely, that in six weeks he oldened more than he had done for fifteen years before—the most determined and obstinate seemed to be John Osborne, his old friend and neighbour—John Osborne, whom he had set up in life—who was under a hundred obligations to him—and whose son was to marry Sedley's daughter. Any one of these circumstances would account for the bitterness of Osborne's opposition.

When one man has been under very remarkable obligations to another, with whom he subsequently quarrels, a common sense of decency, as it were, makes of the former a much severer enemy than a mere stranger would be. To account for your own hardheartedness and ingratitude in such a case, you are bound to prove the other party's crime. It is not that you are selfish, brutal, and angry at the failure of a speculation—no, no—it is that your partner has led you into it by the basest treachery and with the most sinister motives. From a mere sense of consistency, a persecutor is bound to shew that the fallen man is a villain—otherwise he the persecutor is a wretch himself.

And as a general rule, which may make all creditors who are inclined to be severe, pretty comfortable in their minds, no men embarrassed are altogether honest, very likely. They conceal something; they exaggerate chances of good-luck, hide away the real state of affairs, say that things are flourishing when they are hopeless: keep a smiling face (a dreary smile it is) upon the verge of bankruptcy—are ready to lay hold of any pretext for delay, or of any money, so as to stave off the inevitable ruin a few days longer. "Down with such dishonesty," says the creditor in triumph, and reviles his sinking enemy. "You fool, why do you catch at a straw?" calm good sense says to the man that is drowning. "You villain, why do you shrink from plunging into the irretrievable Gazette?" says prosperity to the poor devil battling in that black gulf. Who has not remarked the readiness with which the closest of friends and honestest of men suspect and accuse each other of cheating when they fall out on money matters. Everybody does it. Everybody is right, I suppose, and the world is a rogue.

Then Osborne had the intolerable sense of former benefits to goad and irritate him: these are always a cause of hostility aggravated. Finally, he had to break off the match between Sedley's daughter and his son; and as it had gone very far indeed, and as the poor girl's happiness and perhaps character were compromised, it was necessary to show the strongest reasons for the rupture, and for John Osborne to prove John Sedley to be a very bad character indeed.

At the meetings of creditors, then, he comported himself with a savageness and scorn towards Sedley, which almost succeeded in breaking the heart of that ruined bankrupt man. On George's intercourse with Amelia he put an instant veto—menacing the youth with maledictions if he broke his commands, and vilipending the poor innocent girl as the basest and most artful of vixens. One of the great conditions of anger and hatred is, that you must tell and believe lies against the hated object, in order, as we said, to be consistent.

When the great crash came—the announcement of ruin, and the departure from Russell Square, and the declaration that all was over between her and George—all over between her and love, her and happiness, her and faith in the world—a brutal letter from John Osborne told her in a few curt lines that her father's conduct had been of such a nature that all engagements between the families were at an end—when the final award came, it did not shock her so much as her parents, as her mother rather expected (for John Sedley himself was entirely prostrate in the ruins of his own affairs and shattered honour). Amelia took the news very palely and calmly. It was only the confirmation of the dark presages which had long gone before. It was the mere reading of the sentence—of the crime she had long ago been guilty—the crime of loving wrongly, too violently, against reason. She told no more of her thoughts now than she had before. She seemed scarcely more unhappy now when convinced all hope was over, than before when she felt but dared not confess that it was gone. So she changed from the large house to the small one without any mark or difference; remained less in her little room for the most part; pined silently; and died away day by day. I do not mean to say that all females are so. My dear Miss Bullock, I do not think *your* heart would break in this way. You are a strong-minded young woman with proper principles. I do not venture to say that mine would; it has suffered, and, it must be confessed, survived. But there are some souls thus gently constituted, thus frail, and delicate, and tender.

Whenever old John Sedley thought of the affair between George and Amelia, or alluded to it, it was with bitterness almost as great as Mr. Osborne himself had shown. He cursed Osborne and his family as heartless, wicked, and ungrateful. No power on earth, he swore, would induce him to marry his daughter to the son of such a villain, and he ordered Emmy to banish George from her mind, and to return all the presents and letters which she had ever had from him.

She promised acquiescence, and tried to obey. She put up the two or three trinkets; and, as for the letters, she drew them out of the place where she kept them; and read them over—as if she did not know them by heart already: but she could not part with them. That effort was too much for her; she placed them back in her bosom again—as you have seen a woman nurse a child that is dead. Young Amelia felt that she would die or lose her senses outright, if torn away from this last consolation. How she used to blush and lighten up when those letters came! How she used to trip away with a beating heart, so that she might read unseen. If they were cold, yet how perversely this fond little soul interpreted them into warmth. If they were short or selfish, what excuses she found for the writer!

It was over these few worthless papers that she brooded and brooded. She lived in her past life—every letter seemed to recall some circumstance of it. How well she remembered them all! His looks and tones, his dress, what he said and how—these relics and remembrances of dead affection were all that were left her in the world, and the business of her life, to watch the corpse of Love.

To death she looked with inexpressible longing. Then, she thought, I shall always be able to follow him. I am not praising her conduct or setting her up as a model for Miss Bullock to imitate. Miss B. knows how to regulate her feelings better than this poor little creature. Miss B. would never have committed herself as that imprudent Amelia had done; pledged her loved irretrievably; confessed her heart away, and got back nothing—only a brittle promise which was snapt and worthless in a moment. A long engagement is a partnership which one party is free to keep or to break, but which involves all the capital of the other.

Be cautious then, young ladies; be wary how you engage. Be shy of loving frankly; never tell all you feel, or (a better way still) feel very little. See the consequences of being prematurely honest and confiding, and mistrust yourselves and everybody. Get yourselves married as they do in France, where the lawyers are the bridesmaids and confidantes. At any rate, never have any feelings which may make you uncomfortable, or make any promises which you cannot at any required moment command and withdraw. That is the way to get on, and be respected, and have a virtuous character in Vanity Fair.

If Amelia could have heard the comments regarding her which were made in the circle from which her father's ruin had just driven her, she would have seen what her own crimes were, and how entirely her character was jeopardied. Such criminal imprudence Mrs. Smith never knew of; such horrid familiarities Mrs. Brown had always condemned, and the end might be a warning to *her* daughters. "Captain Osborne, of course, could not marry a bankrupt's daughter," the Miss Dobbins said. "It was quite enough to have been swindled by the father. As for that little Amelia, her folly had really passed all—"

"All what?" Captain Dobbin roared out. "Haven't they been engaged ever since they were children? Wasn't it as good as a marriage? Dare any soul on earth breathe a word against the sweetest, the purest, the tenderest, the most angelical of young women?"

"La, William, don't be so highty tighty with *us*. We're not men. We can't fight you," Miss Jane said. "We've said nothing against Miss Sedley: but that her conduct throughout was *most imprudent*, not to call it by any worse name; and that her parents are people who certainly merit their misfortunes."

"Hadn't you better, now that Miss Sedley is free, propose for her yourself, William?" Miss A. asked sarcastically. "It would be a most eligible family connexion. He! he!"

"I marry her!" Dobbin said, blushing very much and talking quick. "If you are so ready, young ladies, to chop and change, do you suppose that *she* is? Laugh and sneer at that angel. She can't hear it; and she's miserable and unfortunate, and deserves to be laughed at. Go on joking, Ann. You're the wit of the family, and the others like to hear it."

"I must tell you again we're not in a barrack, William," Miss Ann remarked.

"In a barrack, by Jove—I wish anybody in a barrack would say what you do," cried out this improved British lion. "I should like to hear a

man breathe a word against her, by Jupiter. But men don't talk in this way, Ann: it 's only women, who get together, and hiss, and shriek, and cackle. There, get away—don't begin to cry. I only said you were a couple of geese," Will Dobbin said, perceiving Miss Ann's pink eyes were beginning to moisten as usual. "Well, you're not geese, you're swans—anything you like, only do, do leave Miss Sedley alone."

Anything like William's infatuation about that silly little flirting, ogling thing was never known, the mamma and sisters agreed together in thinking: and they trembled lest, her engagement being off with Osborne, she should take up immediately her other admirer and Captain. In which forebodings these worthy young women no doubt judged according to the best of their experience; or rather (for as yet they had had no opportunities or marrying or of jilting) according to their own notions of right and wrong.

"It is a mercy, Mamma, that the regiment is ordered abroad," the girls said. "*This* danger, at any rate, is spared our brother."

Such, indeed, was the fact; and so it is that the French Emperor comes in to perform a part in this domestic comedy of Vanity Fair which we are now playing, and which would never have been enacted without the intervention of this august mute personage. It was he that ruined the Bourbons and Mr. John Sedley. It was he whose arrival in his capital called up all France in arms to defend him there; and all Europe to oust him. While the French nation and army were swearing fidelity round the eagles in the Champ de Mai, four mighty European hosts were getting in motion for the great *chasse à l'aigle;* and one of these was a British army, of which two heroes of ours, Captain Dobbin and Captain Osborne, formed a portion.

The news of Napoleon's escape and landing was received by the gallant —th with a fiery delight and enthusiasm, which everybody can understand who knows that famous corps. From the colonel to the smallest drummer in the regiment, all were filled with hope and ambition and patriotic fury; and thanked the French Emperor as for a personal kindness in coming to disturb the peace of Europe. Now was the time the —th had so long panted for, to show their comrades in arms that they could fight as well as the Peninsular veterans, and that all the pluck and valour of the —th had not been killed by the West Indies and the yellow fever. Stubble and Spoony looked to get their companies without purchase. Before the end of the campaign (which she resolved to share), Mrs. Major O'Dowd hoped to write herself Mrs. Colonel O'Dowd, C.B. Our two friends (Dobbin and Osborne) were quite as much excited as the rest: and each in his way—Mr. Dobbin very quietly, Mr. Osborne very loudly and energetically—was bent upon doing his duty, and gaining his share of honour and distinction.

The agitation thrilling through the country and army in consequence of this news was so great, that private matters were little heeded: and hence probably George Osborne, just gazetted to his company, busy with preparations for the march, which must come inevitably, and panting for further promotion—was not so much affected by other incidents which would have interested him at a more quiet period. He was not, it must be con-

fessed, very much cast down by good old Mr. Sedley's catastrophe. He tried his new uniform, which became him very handsomely, on the day when the first meeting of the creditors of the unfortunate gentleman took place. His father told him of the wicked, rascally, shameful conduct of the bankrupt, reminded him of what he had said about Amelia, and that their connexion was broken off for ever; and gave him that evening a good sum of money to pay for the new clothes and epaulets in which he looked so well. Money was always useful to this free-handed young fellow, and he took it without many words. The bills were up in the Sedley house, where he had passed so many, many happy hours. He could see them as he walked from home that night (to the Old Slaughters', where he put up when in town) shining white in the moon. That comfortable home was shut, then, upon Amelia and her parents: where had they taken refuge? The thought of their ruin affected him not a little. He was very melancholy that night in the coffee-room at the Slaughters; and drank a good deal, as his comrades remarked there.

Dobbin came in presently, cautioned him about the drink, which he only took, he said, because he was deuced low; but when his friend began to put to him clumsy inquiries, and asked him for news in a significant manner, Osborne declined entering into conversation with him; avowing, however, that he was devilish disturbed and unhappy.

Three days afterwards, Dobbin found Osborne in his room at the barracks:—his head on the table, a number of papers about, the young Captain evidently in a state of great despondency. "She 's—she 's sent me back some things I gave her—some damned trinkets. Look here!" There was a little packet directed in the well-known hand to Captain George Osborne, and some things lying about—a ring, a silver knife he had bought, as a boy, for her at a fair; a gold chain, and a locket with hair in it. "It 's all over," said he, with a groan of sickening remorse. "Look, Will, you may read it if you like."

There was a little letter of a few lines, to which he pointed, which said:

"My papa has ordered me to return to you these presents, which you made in happier days to me; and I am to write to you for the last time. I think, I know you feel as much as I do the blow which has come upon us. It is I that absolve you from an engagement which is impossible in our present misery. I am sure you had no share in it, or in the cruel suspicions of Mr. Osborne, which are the hardest of all our griefs to bear. Farewell. Farewell. I pray God to strengthen me to bear this and other calamities, and to bless you always. A.

"I shall often play upon the piano—your piano. It was like you to send it."

Dobbin was very soft-hearted. The sight of women and children in pain always used to melt him. The idea of Amelia broken-hearted and lonely, tore that good-natured soul with anguish. And he broke out into an emotion, which anybody who likes may consider unmanly. He swore that Amelia was an angel, to which Osborne said aye with all his heart. He, too, had been reviewing the history of their lives,—and had seen her

from her childhood to her present age, so sweet, so innocent, so charmingly simple, and artlessly fond and tender.

What a pang it was to lose all that: to have had it and not prized it! A thousand homely scenes and recollections crowded on him—in which he always saw her good and beautiful. And for himself, he blushed with remorse and shame, as the remembrance of his own selfishness and indifference contrasted with that perfect purity. For a while, glory, war, everything was forgotten, and the pair of friends talked about her only.

"Where are they?" Osborne asked, after a long talk, and a long pause, —and, in truth, with no little shame at thinking that he had taken no steps to follow her. "Where are they? There's no address to the note."

Dobbin knew. He had not merely sent the piano; but had written a note to Mrs. Sedley, and asked permission to come and see her,—and he had seen her, and Amelia too, yesterday, before he came down to Chatham; and, what is more, he had brought that farewell letter and packet which had so moved them.

The good-natured fellow had found Mrs. Osborne only too willing to receive him, and greatly agitated by the arrival of the piano, which, as she conjectured, *must* have come from George, and was a signal of amity on his part. Captain Dobbin did not correct this error of the worthy lady, but listened to all her story of complaints and misfortunes with great sympathy—condoled with her losses and privations, and agreed in reprehending the cruel conduct of Mr. Osborne towards his first benefactor. When she had eased her overflowing bosom somewhat, and poured forth many of her sorrows, he had the courage to ask actually to see Amelia, who was above in her room as usual, and whom her mother led trembling down stairs.

Her appearance was so ghastly, and her look of despair so pathetic, that honest William Dobbin was frightened as he beheld it; and read the most fatal forebodings in that pale fixed face. After sitting in his company a minute or two, she put the packet into his hand, and said, "Take this to Captain Osborne, if you please, and—and I hope he's quite well—and it was very kind of you to come and see us—and we like our new house very much. And I—I think I'll go up-stairs, Mamma, for I'm not very strong." And with this, and a curtsey and a smile, the poor child went her way. The mother, as she led her up, cast back looks of anguish towards Dobbin. The good fellow wanted no such appeal. He loved her himself too fondly for that. Inexpressible grief, and pity, and terror pursued him, and he came away as if he was a criminal after seeing her.

When Osborne heard that his friend had found her, he made hot and anxious inquiries regarding the poor child. How was she? How did she look? What did she say? His comrade took his hand, and looked him in the face.

"George, she's dying," William Dobbin said,—and could speak no more.

There was a buxom Irish servant-girl, who performed all the duties of the little house where the Sedley family had found refuge; and this girl had in vain, on many previous days, striven to give Amelia aid or conso-

lation. Emmy was much too sad to answer her, or even to be aware of the attempts the other was making in her favour.

Four hours after the talk between Dobbin and Osborne, this servant-maid came into Amelia's room, where she sate as usual, brooding silently over her letters—her little treasures. The girl, smiling, and looking arch and happy, made many trials to attract poor Emmy's attention, who, however, took no heed of her.

"Miss Emmy!" said the girl.

"I'm coming," Emmy said, not looking round.

"There's a message," the maid went on. "There's something—somebody—sure, here's a new letter for you—don't be reading them old ones any more." And she gave her a letter, which Emmy took, and read.

"I must see you," the letter said. "Dearest Emmy—dearest love—dearest wife, come to me."

George and her mother were outside, waiting until she had read the letter.

THE GENTLEMAN'S REAL HEAD OF HAIR;

OR,

INVISIBLE VENTILATING PERUKE,

Is so close a resemblance to nature as to defy detection; and to enable gentlemen to see the effect, a large assortment is always kept for inspection, any one of which, if approved of, saves the purchaser both time and trouble. These elegant specimens of the perruquean art, superior to any to be obtained elsewhere, either in Paris or London, have only to be seen to be admired, and are the sole invention of

ROSS AND SONS,

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ROSS AND SONS' INFALLIBLE MODE TO MEASURE THE HEAD.

	Inches.	8ths.
Round the head in manner of a fillet, leaving the ears loose, 1 to 1		
From the forehead over to the poll, as deep each way as required, 2 to 2		
From ear to ear across the forehead, close down to the point level with the whisker, 3 to 3		
FOR SCALPS OR PARTIAL BALDNESS.		
From the front as far forward as required, to the hair behind, 1 to 1		
From one side to the other across the forehead as far as bald, 2		
Across the crown or rise of head, 3		

To the Ladies:

It is universally acknowledged by every one of taste, that however beautiful a woman may be, if her hair is deficient, either in quantity, quality, or colour, one of her greatest charms is wanting. A complete remedy for all this is to be found by visiting the establishment of ROSS & SONS, and choosing either head-dresses, that surpass Nature herself, fronts, bands, or ringlets that assist her, or splendid plaits that, encircling the thin hair, give it all the appearance of a luxuriant growth. The partings are so admirably contrived that the nearest inspection is confounded, the transparency of the web admitting the skin of the head to be seen through; they may be described as being as light as a feather.

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The only dye that really answers for all colours, and does not require redoing but as the hair grows, as it never fades or acquires that unnatural red or purple tint common to all other dyes. ROSS and SONS can, with the greatest confidence, recommend the above dye as infallible, if done at their establishment; and Ladies or Gentlemen requiring it, are requested to bring a friend or servant with them to see how it is used, which will enable them to do it afterwards without the chance of failure. They think it necessary to add, that by attending strictly to the instructions given with each bottle of dye, numerous persons have succeeded equally well without coming to them.

Botanic Water and Bear's Grease:

When the hair is becoming thin, and falling off, the only effectual remedy, besides shaving the head, is the use of the two above-named articles, applied alternately; the Botanic Water to cleanse the roots from scurf and as a stimulant, and the Bear's Grease as a nourisher. If any further evidence was required of the virtues of Bear's Grease, for renovating and preserving the hair, Mr. Catlin's account of the quantity used, and the length of hair obtained by some of the North American Indians, would be a sufficient answer.

ROSS and SONS, who first introduced the use of Bear's Grease in this country, and who fat and kill the animals, recommend the public to purchase none other but with their names and address printed on the pot, or the chances are their obtaining a spurious article.

The New Tooth Brush,

Made on the most scientific principles, thoroughly cleaning between the teeth when used up and down, and polishing the surface when used cross-ways. This brush so entirely enters between the closest teeth, that the inventors have decided upon naming it the Toothpick Brush; therefore, ask for it under that name, marked and numbered as under—viz. Full-sized brushes, mark T P W, No. 1, hard; No. 2, less hard; No. 3, middling; No. 4, soft; the narrower brushes, mark T P N, No. 5, hard; No. 6, less hard; No. 7, middling; No. 8, soft. These inimitable brushes are only to be had at ROSS and SONS', and they warrant the hair never to come out; at 1*s.* each, or 10*s.* per dozen, in bone; and 2*s.* each, or 21*s.* per dozen, in ivory.

Do you wish to avoid all the torture "which Shaving has entailed upon your chins?"

Then hasten and try

ROSS and SONS' newly-invented RAILWAY STROP; so named, as it enables you to shave yourself at a railway pace, and with as little friction, making even the commonest razor cut well. The composition is entirely new, and surpasses everything hitherto invented for the purpose. Likewise, instead of Paste, which few can apply properly, theirs is a powder for renovating the Strop, and can be used by a child.

Address ROSS and SONS, 119 and 120, Bishopsgate Street, London.

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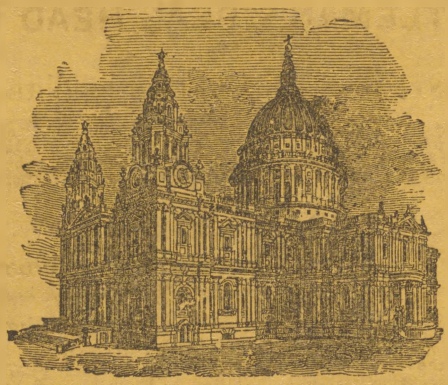

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The **BEST COFFEE**, whether choice *old Mountain Mocha* or Jamaica, 2*s*. per pound.
COFFEES mellow in ripeness and richness of flavour, 1*s*. 6*d*. and 1*s*. 8*d*. per pound.
Inferior kinds from 9*d*. per pound and upwards.

These are the prices of some of our Coffees. The Best is 2*s*. per pound—and the Best is the Best—if people can only get hold of it—but how few can! and why? Because they are always being told that the Best can be supplied at 1*s*. 9*d*. per pound—now the Best can *not* be sold at that price. Our Best is 2*s*. per pound, and we trust we

HAVE NOW ESTABLISHED

it as the Best; for it is in reality the very best and choicest old Coffee imported. It is far better than the Best of the Bests frequently spoken of; it is in verity and truth the very Best, and we pledge ourselves most sincerely that it shall give every and unqualified satisfaction to the consumer. Taste then, Ye lovers of fine Coffee, and prove its excellence.

Again, we respectfully solicit attention to the Coffee we sell at 1*s*. 8*d*. per pound, and invite comparison

THE PRINCIPLE

to which we look for success, with that commonly known as the Best, and if ours be not the better, we are content that all our assertions be considered vain and empty; and so convinced are we of the superior quality of this widely approved good Coffee, that we are satisfied to stand or fall by the result.

To enable the public to prove as much as possible, without tasting the Coffee, the truth of what we have just stated, we will endeavour to show the present market value of some of the principal sorts, as space will not permit us mentioning many, and we will add the price at which we are in the habit

OF SELLING RETAIL.

	Price per cwt. for Raw Coffee	*British Duty.*	*Selling price at "Number One" for Roasted Coffee.*	
			At per cwt.	*At per pound.*
	s. *s.*		*s. d.* *s. d.*	*s. d.* *s. d.*
JAMAICA, ordinary to middling ..	28 to 70	4*d* and 5 per cent.	84 0 to 144 8	or 0 9 to 1 3½
Good middling to fine qualities ..	75 ,, 130	4*d* and 5 per cent.	149 0 ,, 224 0	,, 1 4 ,, 2 0
CEYLON, ordinary to low middling	40 ,, 58	4*d* and 5 per cent.	107 4 ,, 130 8	,, 0 11½ ,, 1 2
Middling to fine plantation	60 ,, 96	4*d* and 5 per cent.	133 0 ,, 177 4	,, 1 2¼ ,, 1 7
BERBICE and DEMERARA	30 ,, 80	4*d* and 5 per cent.	88 8 ,, 156 4	,, 0 9½ ,, 1 4½
DOMINICA and ST. LUCIA	30 ,, 75	4*d* and 5 per cent,	133 0 ,, 151 8	,, 0 9½ ,, 1 4¼
MOCHA	50 ,, 110	6*d* and 5 per cent.	144 8 ,, 224 0	,, 1 3½ ,, 2 0
COSTA RICA	33 ,, 60	6*d* and 5 per cent.	121 4 ,, 156 4	,, 1 1 ,, 1 4¾
JAVA	36 ,, 54	6*d* and 5 per cent.	128 4 ,, 140 4	,, 1 1¾ ,, 1 4
CUBA, &c. &c.....	37 ,, 80	6*d* and 5 per cent.	128 4 ,, 182 0	,, 1 1¾ ,, 1 7½

By the above list it will be noticed that we supply the public retail not only

AT WHOLESALE PRICES,

but we may say at merchants' prices, which, being ourselves merchants, we are enabled to do and give them every advantage. This is the principle on which our business was based, and which has already met with such gratifying and remunerating success, for prosperity and public favour has hitherto attended, and we respectfully hope will ultimately crown, our great undertaking, the object of which has been to bring the growers and producers of, we may now say, the necessaries of life, in direct communication with the consumers, more particularly for the great benefit of the latter.

The visitors to London are fearlessly assured, that they may save a considerable portion of their railway expenses by purchasing Coffees as well as Teas

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which is in the very centre of England's metropolis, and a position more easily identified than any in

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